

Christopher Stoddart  
alms house  
March 21st

Essay  
on  
Dysentery

Christopher Stoddart-

admitted March 21st. 1821

*Dysentery*  
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Dysentery is a disease in which the patient has frequent stools accompanied with much griping, and followed by tenesmus; the stools are usually small in quantity, chiefly mucous, and this sometimes mixed with blood; the natural position of the anus when they go, it is in a compact, hardened form called syphala. It occurs most frequently in summer and autumn at the same time with bilious intermittent and remittent fevers with which it is sometimes complicated. It makes its attack with cold shivers and other symptoms, though Cullen says the typical affection of the bowels in a majority of cases precedes this. There is at the commencement of the disease severe griping, frequent inclination to go to stool, and little voided; the stools become gradually more frequent and the griping much increased; loss of appetite, nausea and meteoric distension are soon added to these symptoms; the stools are much diminished in the course of the disease, being in some instances entirely composed of a mucous matter, as testaments name of mucus, mucous, or dysenteria alba. It is however most usual for blood to be mixed with it in greater or less quantity; pure blood is occasionally evacuated to a considerable amount; the evacuation of the natural feces is said always to afford considerable relief to the patient.

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In this manner the disease runs on for a longer or shorter duration according to the nature of the fever and violence of the attack.

There is a case of dysentery in which there is no discharge from the bowels, and this is said to be the most formidable shape of the disease, the inflammatory action being on so high a degree as to surpass the soreness grade. Cullen and most of the authors who have written on this disease have considered contagion as one of the causes of it; this opinion is however entirely erroneous, it being now ascertained to be contagious only when the fever is originally typhoid, or has become so in the course of the disease. It may more commonly be traced to the causes of autumnal bilious fevers, as marsh effluvia, and irregular diet in diet. It is sometimes epidemic, seeming to depend on some fault of the atmosphere; cold alternating with heat and moisture may act as causes of the complaint. It sometimes accompanies catarrh and in some cases alternates with rheumatism. Sydenham says it is a febrile disease turned in upon the bowels. It is in the first instance a gastric disease, the stomach being the point attacked, from which it extends to the alimentary canal, and more especially the large intestines. The pathology of the

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disease is inflammation of their lining membrane, and dissections shew this thing burst thro' whole track, spreading in some cases even into the stomach; sometimes they are found of a very dark colour almost approaching the gangrenous condition; their coats are often thickened and in different parts tender as of nearly putrid. The large intestines are said to be more frequently affected with gangrene and ulceration than the small, constrictions are also found in the former, in some cases of considerable extent, and have even by some been supposed to be the immediate cause of the disease by retaining the natural feces, which in this manner becoming indurated occasion the irritation, and mucous bloody discharge always present in this complaint. A great degree of tenderness, some griping, frequent inclination to go to stool, and little being voided, much prostration of strength, very offensive evacuations, a tense and painful abdomen, cold clammy sweat, cold extremities, a stiff, hurried, and a weak irregular pulse are unfavorable symptoms, and the reverse of these, as moderate diarrhoea, slight fever, stools not very

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frequently, and of a natural consistence, with a gradual diminution of the griping and tenesmus, are signs of returning health. — The indications of cure in this disease arise, I believe, inflammation, irritation, and spasm usually attending it, to procure a free discharge of the contents of the bowels, and restore the healthy action of the liver. It has been usual to commence the treatment by giving an emetic, and this practice is approved and followed by many respectable practitioners of the present day, with the intention of relieving the spasm of the intestines, and as a beginning attempt at restoring the action of the surface. As both these indications however can be much better answered by the means which are commonly employed for the cure of the disease, their employment is rendered unnecessary except in the cases where the stomach is disordered by the presence of bile, or other acrid matters exciting nausea, and which are most frequently met with in miasmatic districts combined with intermittent. Bloodletting is certainly the most important and decidedly beneficial remedy we have in the management of this disease, and

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direct efforts to be taken by recording all matters  
 needed in the; early employment checks the progress  
 of the work and as a kind of insurance to the  
 records, it is a most important part of the  
 system. It generally is considered as an obstacle to the progress  
 of a project, as it often is, but it is equally advantageous  
 changing a letter into a paper is a most useful and valuable  
 should be kept in the hands of twenty or thirty persons  
 and this must be a matter of necessity for several reasons. There seems to  
 have been a very general relaxation of opinion among the  
 medical writers on this subject, and the consequence  
 to be apprehended is that the practice of medicine  
 is in it; whatever reason there may be for such  
 a common European practice, in this country it is usually  
 not decided, and it is marked as of a dangerous nature  
 in a high degree and is without doubt to be regarded by  
 blinding to the amount above mentioned, and strict application  
 of the rules and regulations of the practice of medicine  
 is the cause which is necessary among the young students

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discharging the blood of the system, and the  
 most beneficial use of it, is that it is needed  
 in nature, either as a stimulant or as a  
 it is early on, and it is from an area of the sweat  
 being caused to flow out, and it is almost certain to  
 be, and the first step for the same reason, is to  
 aggravate and continue the symptoms, by providing a  
 cure. At the same time, as the circulation is shut  
 down, to restore the healthy action, the skin, and  
 will be restored by sweating after the necessary  
 of the skin, and it is by the skin, and by the  
 this is the most important part of the treatment of  
 this disease. However, was the skin, and the  
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bath and warm air he will be found to be more  
 easily improved than by the effect of any other  
 means. The use of the bath must be  
 employed under the same circumstances, and for the same  
 time, and highly recommended by Buring and Baker  
 as having much efficacy to drive out the morbid matter  
 now long established in dysentery; it is originally  
 given in small doses so as to make it act as the true cathartic;  
 it is thought to be more effectually adapted to that form of the  
 disease in which there is a profuse discharge of blood  
 from the bowels, but it is more usually successful in those  
 cases in which the pain is great and the action of the bowels  
 is slow. It is without doubt very serviceable at all stages  
 of the disease. The repetition of a mixture of the oil of  
 sweet almond and the decoction of the bark has  
 been said to be a serviceable mixture now known to be superior  
 to any other; much more effect is to be expected  
 from the use of using the decoction of the bark  
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 thought that the use of the decoction of the bark  
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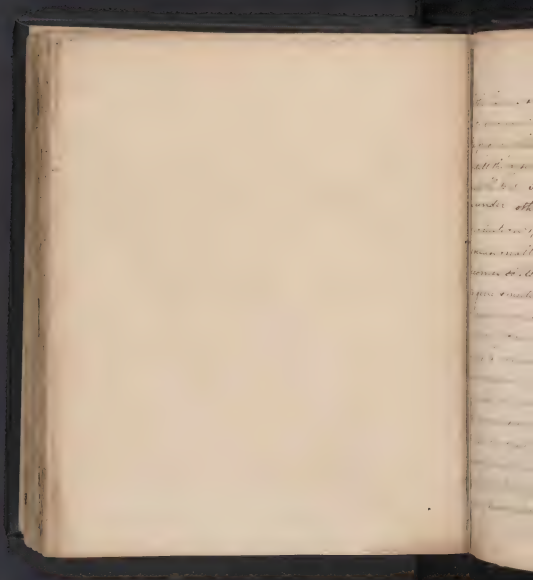
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of the system. They should always  
 be preceded by fomentations, either warm with the  
 decoction of poplar bark, or whole wheat, or  
 mustard. The warm bath is very useful in some  
 protracted cases of this disease, and its effect will probably  
 be most advantageous in the more advanced stages.  
 There are the remedies which will in various manners be  
 efficacious in removing the inflammatory symptoms of  
 secondary but there are some local effects which must  
 be managed by their appropriate remedies. The most  
 important of these are the various and sometimes  
 making this report the whole course of the complaint, but  
 most always in the latter stages the source of severe  
 suffering and distress to the patient, they are generally  
 the result of an excessive suppuration of the  
 a few grains which melted in this, and without  
 a little the result of the same is the same.  
 A strong solution of the mucilage of soda is recommended  
 for these symptoms, and is intended to be continued  
 till the system is relieved of the inflammation, and

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